

# Stimulus or Pork?

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) reports that only 7% of the stimulus spending in the House-passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (approx. \$358 billion of the total) will be spent this year. By the end of 2010, only 38% will be spent. And by the end of 2011, only 67% will be spent. [Click here](#) to view a *Washington Post* story about the CBO Report.

Including both tax cuts and stimulus checks, only one-fifth of the total package will be spent in 2009.

- For \$816 billion, we could cut payroll taxes for every American worker by \$1,500. [Click here](#) for Lawrence B. Lindsey's *Wall Street Journal* column.
- The \$825 billion stimulus package will exceed more than \$1.1 trillion when adding in the interest (\$300+ billion) between 2009-2019 to pay for it.
- More than 10 million people — many of whom are not poor and not children — will be added to Medicaid and other government health programs, permanently expanding these programs. [Click here](#) for Kim Strassel's *Wall Street Journal* column.
- Some specific line items in the stimulus bill:
  - \$650 million for digital TV coupons
  - \$600 million to buy new cars for the federal government
  - \$6 billion for colleges/universities
  - \$44 million for repairs to U.S. Department of Agriculture headquarters
  - \$200 million for the National Mall, including \$21 million for sod
  - \$360 million for new child care centers at military bases
  - \$200 million for "Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund Program"
  - \$14 million for funding the Recovery Act
- Accountability and Transparency Board and their Independent Advisory Panel which will consist of a total of 12 people.
- \$50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (more than a 30% funding increase)
- \$1.1 billion to Amtrak
- \$30 billion for highway and bridge construction
- \$300 million to upgrade job training facilities that serve unemployed youth
- \$400 million for habitat restoration projects
- \$4.2 billion for the government to purchase vacant properties to reduce neighborhood blight
- \$1 billion for Community Development Block Grants. This is a catch-all fund for projects that don't fit into other "stimulus" categories.
- \$200 million fund for rural areas to build "community facilities," such as for healthcare, education, fire and rescue, day care, community centers, and libraries.
- **Not specifically listed in the bill is a list of 18,750 projects, proposed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors.** These are the sorts of projects that mayors said will be funded with money such as the non-descript Community Development Block Grant or the rural development money in the stimulus bill.
  - \$2 million for North Miami households to switch to energy-efficient light bulbs
  - \$886,000 for a 36-hole "disk-golf" course in Austin, Texas
  - \$33,725 for automatically flushing toilets in Sumter, SC
  - \$1.4 million children's water park in Pine Bluff, Ark.
  - \$500,000 dog park in Chula Vista, California

- \$6 million to construct three aquatics facilities (Olympic pool, waterslide, water playground, bathhouse) in Shreveport, LA.
- \$320,000 for lights at the Brockton, Mass. little league ball field.
- \$50,000 for two (2) dog parks in Lewiston, Maine.
- \$325,000 to buy 25 new cars for the City of Dearborn, Mich.
- \$1.5 million to replace the Roseville, Minn., golf course clubhouse and maintenance shop.
- \$50,000 to purchase two (2) police cars for town of Friars Point, Miss.
- \$60,000 to hire two (2) new police officers in Friars Point, Miss. to drive the two (2) new cars.
- \$250,000 to replace gymnasium floor and repaint at South Rocky Mount, N.C. Community Center
- \$500,000 for public marina floating docks in Elizabeth, N.H.
- \$6 million for the Hawaiian Ocean View Estates Hurricane Shelter and Community Center
- \$1 million to seal coat the streets of Idaho Falls, Idaho.

A full list of the mayors' projects can be found by [clicking here](#).

- The plan establishes at least 32 new government programs at a cost of over \$136 billion. That means more than a third of this plan's spending provisions are dedicated to creating new government programs.
- The plan increases spending in at least 150 different federal programs, ranging from Amtrak to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).
- The total cost of this one piece of legislation is almost as much as the annual discretionary budget for the entire federal government.

- The bill will cost each and every household \$6,700 in additional debt, paid for by our children and grandchildren.
- The bill provides enough spending – \$825 billion – to give \$2,700 to every man, woman, and child in America.
- \$825 billion is enough to give every person living in poverty in the United States \$22,000.
- Although stimulus bill has been billed as a transportation and infrastructure investment package, in actuality only \$30 billion of the bill – or three percent – is for road and highway spending. A recent study from the nonpartisan CBO found that only 25 percent of infrastructure dollars can be spent in the first year, making the one year total less than \$7 billion.
- Much of the funding within the House Democrats' proposal will go to programs that already have large, unexpended balances. For example, the bill provides \$1 billion for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) – a program that already has \$16 billion on hand. States also are sitting on some \$9 billion in unused highway funds – funds that Congress is prepared to rescind later this year.
- A scant 2.7 percent, or \$22.3 billion of the overall package, is dedicated to small business tax relief.
- The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the legislation increases by seven million the number of people who get a check back from the IRS that exceeds what they paid in payroll and income taxes.
- The "Making Work Pay" tax credit at the center of the plan amounts to \$1.37 a day, or about the price of a cup of coffee.
- Almost one-third of the "tax relief" in the stimulus bill is spending in disguise, meaning that true tax relief makes up only 24 percent of the total package – not the 40 percent that President Obama had requested.