

Trump and GOP Oppose New House Economic Stimulus Measure

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On Friday, the Dem-controlled House narrowly passed a new \$3 trillion stimulus package — by a 208 - 199 majority.

*Fourteen House Dems opposed the measure. Republican **Peter King**, representing New York's hard-hit 2nd district, supported the so-called Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act."*

The GOP-controlled Senate and Trump oppose the measure, wanting aid going largely to corporate America, favoring crumbs alone for ordinary people in need.

They oppose further public health and welfare measures that don't include suspension of employer and worker payroll taxes at least through yearend.

Revenues from them are essential to fund Social Security and Medicare, vital programs they want eroded and eliminated.

As things now stand, the politicized House measure in an election year is going nowhere — despite serving the interests of the US pay or die health insurance industry, benefits it lobbied for heavily.

The House bill includes insurance company subsidies through yearend to continue coverage for laid off or furloughed workers whose employers provide high-quality health insurance.

The benefit was included in House legislation primarily to assure a continued revenue stream for insurers through January 31, 2021 — instead of guaranteeing healthcare for all Americans, a new national policy, Medicare for all that both right wings of the one-party state oppose.

Subsidies to insurers will largely benefit them and workers with high-quality employer-provider coverage of most or all their healthcare needs.

Uninsured workers are left out. Ones way under-insured are marginally helped at best, far short of what's needed, leaving them unable to receive expensive healthcare services for lack of being able to pay for them.

The House bill also provides no health insurance for individuals who bought their own coverage.

Tens of millions of Americans are on their own uninsured during unprecedented economic

collapse that's likely to be protracted.

A national healthcare emergency exists for individuals becoming seriously ill at this time — unaddressed by House legislation.

The world's richest country is indifferent toward the health and welfare of its ordinary people, serving privileged ones alone, including at a time of economic crisis that's likely to worsen before beginning to improve.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell responded derisively to the House measure, saying:

"We have not yet felt the urgency of acting immediately. That time could develop, but I don't think it has yet."

The measure includes about \$1 trillion for states and cities that face their severest budget shortfalls in memory.

Without considerable federal help, they're increasingly forced to lay off workers and slash public expenditures for lack of funds.

New York needs over \$60 billion in federal aid, almost as much for California at around \$54 billion.

Without a proposed income tax hike, my own state of Illinois will be \$7.4 billion short of being able to meet its financial obligations for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

My home city of Chicago has a \$1 billion budget hole, Mayor Lori Lightfoot saying "we are going to be in a world of hurt" because of lost tax revenues.

Along with worker layoffs, the city's already high property taxes may be raised to help reduce the revenue shortfall.

Other provisions of the House bill include \$200 billion in hazard pay for frontline workers, and another \$1,200 for laid off individuals up to a maximum \$3,600 for affected households with three or more members.

More funding for COVID-19 testing and tracing is also included.

At around 29,000 tested per one million population, the US lags well behind Russia, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Belgium.

It about matches the testing level in Britain and Canada.

There's no data available on China, a nation that mass-tested almost everyone in areas hard-hit by COVID-19 outbreaks.

Days earlier, the South China Morning Post reported that all 14 million Wuhan area residents will be retested over a 10-day period after a small number of new outbreaks occurred in the city.

China quickly responds to outbreaks when happen to prevent a second large-scale wave it's going all-out to avoid.

According to US public health experts, close to a million tests should be conducted daily in the country to control outbreaks — things nowhere near this standard.

Inadequate contact tracing and the testing shortfall are key factors behind continued US large numbers of new cases daily.

The new House bill also includes \$10 billion in additional funding for food stamps, a small fraction of what's needed.

Another \$10 billion is for small businesses. Most small US enterprises have gotten little or nothing in federal aid, why hundreds of thousands that shut down won't reopen.

The bill includes \$25 billion for the financially-strapped US Postal Service that Trump and GOP leaders want privatized.

With Senate GOP and White House opposition, the House measure is going nowhere.

Perhaps a revised bill will surface in the weeks ahead.

Whatever new legislation is congressionally passed and enacted into law by Trump will be corporate America-friendly at the expense of equity and justice for the nation's ordinary people.

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