

Eagle Forum Report

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200 W. Third St., Ste. 502 • Alton, IL 62002 • (618) 433-8990 • Eagle@EagleForum.org • EagleForum.org

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It's the Economy, Stupid

THE FLEECING OF AMERICA

by Adam Andrzejewski, CEO and founder of OpenTheBooks.com. Portions of this column were previously published.

Just how much waste, pork and silly spending are taxpayers subsidizing? Inflation is at a 40-year high and just crossed eight-percent on a rolling 12-month basis. Most economists agree inflation is the result of our federal government throwing trillions of dollars into pandemic relief, the federal budget, and “infrastructure.”

It's too much money chasing too few goods — setting up the classic case for runaway inflation. Much of the government spending was borrowed against our future.

Our ever-rising national debt just surpassed \$30 trillion this year — at least \$91,613 for every person in the U.S. So, just how much federal waste, silliness, weird or unnecessary spending are your tax dollars funding?

Delving into the trillions of dollars in annual spending, our auditors at OpenTheBooks.com, recently examined Washington's discretionary spending — beyond such big-ticket items as health, welfare and defense.

We found staggering examples and highlighted some of the worst in our new oversight report, *Where's The Pork?*

State and Local Pandemic “Bailouts”

At the highest level, large, popu-

lous states received pandemic bailouts despite being on strong fiscal footing. California was sitting on a massive \$75.7 billion budget surplus at the time President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act, a trillion-plus-dollar law that many critics say



spiked the rapid inflation now upending household budgets. Despite Governor Gavin Newsom publicly bragging about the surplus, the California state government reaped another \$26 billion in federal tax dollars under the rescue plan.

Funds were allocated based on the state unemployment rate, meaning California cashed in, while states with better policies and lower unemployment lost out. West Virginia, for example, had its funds adjusted down by \$900 million as tax dollars were directed elsewhere. Georgia lost out on \$1.5 billion.

Gov. Newsom has so much mon-

ey to play with, he cut \$8.1 billion in state-level stimulus checks to his residents. In 2021, California cruised to a \$100 billion budget surplus!

The congressional bailouts were equally as egregious at the local level. The 50 richest places in America, those best positioned to weather any storm, ended up with \$100 million in COVID relief funding. Atherton, California, the richest town in America, took in \$1.4 million.

Other Pandemic “Aid” Waste

The federal government isn't just wasting taxpayer money, they are literally ripping us off.

Dead people were paid billions: 2.2 million deceased people received \$3.6 billion in economic stimulus checks. The government asked for it back, but dead people are notoriously bad about paying up. The federal government is equally bad about clawing it back.

How did this happen? Well, the Internal Revenue Service didn't check the Social Security Administration's “deceased persons” list.

The Do Not Pay list got paid. The Small Business Administration doled out 57,000 Paycheck Protection Plan forgivable loans to entities on the Do Not Pay list housed at Treasury. Cost to taxpayers was \$3.6 billion.

(Continued on page 2)

Ridiculous Federal Spending

We found that the federal government is literally gambling away hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars — on pigeons.

National Institutes of Health doled out a \$463,330 grant to researchers at Reed College to “create a token-based economy where pigeons are taught to gamble with slot machines.” The pigeons were given tokens, and could choose whether to spend, save or gamble them. No explanation in how the gambling habits of pigeons translate to humans.

The National Science Foundation gave a \$556,584 grant that in part funded a study of beasts pooping — yes, *The Hydrodynamics of Defecation*. Animal bowel movements were measured, studied, and documented, including the release of four very gross videos.

Nearly \$7 million was spent on technology to film your rear end — while you’re on the toilet. National Cancer Institute gave this grant to Sanford University, whose researchers admitted, “To fully reap the benefits of the smart toilet, users must make their peace with a camera that scans their anus.”

Dr. Anthony Fauci’s Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases spent \$478,188 in an attempt turn monkeys transgender. The National Science Foundation gave a \$300,000 grant for a virtual reality penguin study and gave Harvard \$75,000 grant to “blow lizards off trees with leaf blowers.”

Somehow, Congress still has their hidden slush fund for workplace disputes. First uncovered during the early days of the #MeToo movement, the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights paid \$18.2 million since 1997 to settle 291 cases of workplace disputes. It’s beyond time to open those books.

When flashing back to egregious

spending examples in recent years, we uncovered:

In 2018, the U.S. Air Force spent \$1,280 per “hot cup” to keep coffee warm for their fighter pilots. Then-Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley asked the Air Force for an audit, which found it spent \$300,000 on the expensive cups over three years. This waste was stopped.

In 2016, we found that Veterans Affairs spent \$20 million on a high-end luxury art portfolio during a period when sick veterans were dying because the agency claimed a lack of budget to hire enough doctors. It was wasted on 27 foot Christmas trees costing \$21,000; six-figure artwork; and \$700,000 sculptures.

Since 2020, federal spending has been especially wasteful, as the political class used the Covid-19 pandemic as an excuse to spend wildly on anything and everything under the sun.

Musician and former presidential candidate Kanye West, who claims a net worth of \$3.2 billion, took \$2.4 million in coronavirus relief from the PPP for his clothing and sneaker company, Yeezy LLC.

A legal loophole in the PPP was used by 125 defense firms with strong ties to the Communist Chinese Party to collect between \$200-400 million to help American small businesses.

It’s an open question whether or not Chinese hackers funded an entire year of China’s military budget (\$206 billion) by stealing U.S. unemployment aid. Primarily Chinese and Russian hackers stole up to \$400 billion. It’s the largest public fraud in U.S. history.

Fully Staffed Public Relations

Don’t worry. Be happy. Washington spends billions on public affairs professionals tasked with breaking the bad news to us gently and with

panache.

Don’t like the hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan? The State Department bureaucrats can dress that up with a fleet of public relations officers. Is there really an illegal-entrant crisis on our southern border? Homeland Security employs nearly 500 PR officers to tell you that everything will be okay.

Between 2007 and 2014, the federal government spent \$4.4 billion on salaries and benefits for PR officers in the agencies, as well as contracts with outside public relations firms.

In 2014, there were 3,092 public relations officers — known to journalists as “press flacks” — in over 200 federal agencies. By 2020, the headcount of PR officers rose to 3,847 with more than half of them, 2,364 making six figures in base pay alone.

Last year, when Dr. Anthony Fauci was on seemingly every news program in the country, the National Institutes of Health alone was paying no fewer than 86 public relations officers. The CDC and FDA collectively employed 81 additional PR officers.

Unfortunately, wasteful spending isn’t anything new. Beginning in 1975, then-Sen. William Proxmire, a Democrat from Wisconsin, gave the Golden Fleece Award to showcase wasteful and nonsensical spending.

If he were still alive and in office today, Proxmire would find a target-rich environment for his Golden Fleece award. 

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BAD IDEAS HAVE BAD CONSEQUENCES

by E. Calvin Beisner, Ph.D., is Founder and National Spokesman of The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation and author of over 16 books.

If you have not noticed rising prices or if you did not expect rising prices, either you have not been paying attention to American monetary, fiscal, welfare, and pandemic policies or you have not understood basic economics. June's year-on-year inflation rate was 9.1%, which followed May and April each over 8%. This rapid rise started in October 2021.

The Federal Reserve's contribution to the rapid rise in inflation has been a stupidly loose monetary policy for the last decade, with negative interest rates (i.e., paying people to borrow money) and "quantitative easing," which is "Modern Monetary Policy's" (a.k.a. Keynesianism's) term meant to mask the fact that it is just creating "money" out of thin air. Every new dollar printed reduces the spending power of every dollar already in the market, which results in higher prices for goods and services.

The federal government's contributions have been multiple. First, it is over-regulated and otherwise overly restricted in almost all sectors of the economy, restricting productivity, leading to fewer goods being chased by all those imaginary dollars, resulting in higher prices for goods and services paid for by those imaginary dollars. I said "almost all sectors" because one sector it has not regulated, but has instead subsidized like crazy is "renewable energy" (wind and solar), which cannot generate electricity as cheaply or reliably as coal, natural gas, nuclear, and hydro and therefore push prices up and reliability down.

Second, the federal government has imposed, or encouraged states to impose, lockdowns on our economy

in the vain, utterly unsuccessful effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19, leading to far fewer people going to work producing all the goods and services for which those imaginary dollars bid, resulting in higher prices for goods and services.

Third, the federal government gave Americans three fat checks and forced so many of them to stay home from work, which resulted in millions leaving the labor force and the closure of millions of small businesses.

Both Democrats and Republicans share the blame for all this craziness.

America's governments — federal and state — aren't alone in having done such stupid, destructive things. China hugely reduced its manufacturing which led to fewer goods chased by those imaginary dollars, hence rising prices.

Anybody who didn't foresee the inevitability of serious price increases was either asleep or ignorant of basic economics.

One thing's for sure: more of the hair of the dog (government spending) that bit us will only make matters worse. A 180-degree reversal (Biblically, that's called repentance) is what's needed.

Sad to say, politicians' worries about the next election cycle stand in the way of that. And they do so because the public is as ignorant of basic economics as they are. The public doesn't want to go through the painful belt-tightening necessary to end this government-caused crisis. It wants to mask the disease, not cure it.

So, what is to be done? We must generate widespread public understanding of basic economics and the

determination not to vote for anybody who supports policies that are inconsistent with it.

I tried to impart such understanding with my book *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity*,



an introduction to economics built on the foundation of Biblical worldview, theology, and ethics. Make no mistake about it: if our executive and legislative branches had been controlled by people who understood that and were committed to governing according to its principles, we wouldn't be where we are today — we'd have a much more prosperous, just, peaceful, and free society than we do.

More recently, Rainer Zitelmann, in *The Power of Capitalism: A Journey Through Recent History Across Five Continents*, has presented not so much a theoretical as an empirical defense of the free-market, capitalist economics the betrayal of which brought us to the present crisis. Chapter after chapter compares countries that chose more capitalist policies with similar countries that chose more socialist policies and shows the indubitable preferability of the former over the latter.

The cure of America's — and any other country's — economic ills will not come from the top down. It must come from the bottom up. 

NO SECURITY AT OUR BORDER

by Charlotte Cuthbertson, writer at *The Epoch Times*. Reprinted with Permission from *The Epoch Times* (theepochtimes.com)

Sheriffs in Texas are experiencing the impact of the border crisis in their counties every day — whether it's armed cartel operatives smuggling illegal immigrants, vehicle pursuits resulting in crashes and deaths, or drug overdose deaths from fentanyl brought across the southern border.

In Goliad, Sheriff Roy Boyd sits 200 miles from the Texas-Mexico border, between McAllen and Houston — a major transport corridor of illegal immigrants and illicit goods.

As a 29-year law enforcement veteran in the region, Boyd said he's never seen a border crisis so bad or border-related crime so egregious.

"There's no end to it," he told *The Epoch Times* on June 23. He monitors 16 cartel-operated sites in his county that are currently dormant, but have been used to stash illegal immigrants on their way to Houston. Currently it's mostly carloads of illegal immigrants being smuggled straight through his county to the city.

"It's a movement of individuals from third world countries, all over the place, into our country. But the farther you get into it, the more you realize it's all done by design — and it's at the design of the federal government. We're in a transformation of America from a free Republic to moving to something that's more of a Marxist state."

Since President Biden took office in January 2021, border authorities have apprehended more than 3.2 million illegal border crossers, according to Customs and Border Protection data. An additional 800,000 or so have been detected, but evaded capture.

When asked how allowing millions of people from more than 160 countries through the southern border results in the transformation to communism, Boyd harkened back to the

1960s and President Lyndon B. Johnson's "war on poverty."

"This is nothing but a replication of the soft enslavement of people through entitlement," Boyd said. "Because if you understand psychology and you look at the history of things, this is how it functions. Once it starts, it's hard to stop."

Trevor Loudon said, "This is an orchestrated, communist assault on America, to destroy America's borders, to create confusion in America, to overwhelm the system politically."

Loudon said an additional 15 million to 25 million Democratic voters would ensure perpetual Democrat control of government.

"You will have a one-party state in America. And that is the plan," he said.

"This is Marxist. This is Leninist. This goes back to American politicians cooperating with hostile foreign powers in the destruction of America. Their No. 1 weapon is illegal immigration and overwhelming the border."

Noncitizens have voted about 80 percent Democratic and 20 percent Republican, according to a 2014 study by Old Dominion University.

"We find that some non-citizens participate in U.S. elections, and that this participation has been large enough to change meaningful election outcomes including Electoral College votes, and Congressional elections," the study concluded.

"Non-citizen votes likely gave Senate Democrats the pivotal 60th vote needed to overcome filibusters in order to pass health care reform and other Obama administration priorities in the 111th Congress."

Now, the number of non-Hispanic illegal aliens entering the United States is increasing at the same time

that Hispanics are skewing more Republican, as evidenced by Rep. Mayra Flores's recent win in south Texas.

It's illegal for non-U.S. citizens to vote in federal elections, however, for years there's been a push for municipal elections to accept noncitizen voters, including visa holders.

Eliseo Medina, a labor union activist and former immigration consultant to President Obama, said in 2009:

"[If] we reform the immigration laws, it puts 12 million people on the path to citizenship and eventually voters. Can you imagine ... [even] if we get 8 million new voters that care about our issue and will be voting — we will create a governing coalition for the long term, not just for an election cycle."

Fourteen municipalities currently allow noncitizens to vote, including 11 in Maryland, two in Vermont, and one in San Francisco.

A recent court ruling quashed a New York City law that would have allowed at least 800,000 noncitizens to vote in municipal elections.

Hans von Spakovsky, manager of the Heritage Foundation's Election Law Reform Initiative said allowing noncitizens to vote "cheapens and diminishes" the concept of citizenship.

"The whole point of the open borders crowd is to do two things: one, extinguish the line between legal and illegal aliens in this country. And second, to frankly get rid of the whole concept of citizenship," he said.

Biden has said he wants a pathway to citizenship for all illegal immigrants in the United States.

Boyd said his focus remains in Goliad to protect his county and make it an unwelcoming place for criminals. The sheriffs in the region try to work together to "help each other to fight this massive wave of criminal activity," he said.

"We're fighting all the felonies that are being brought to our doorstep as a result of the national policy that's causing this problem." 