



## **Critics: Stimulus package full of wasteful spending on programs unrelated to coronavirus**

Bethany Blankley

December 24, 2020

The \$2.3 trillion omnibus bill passed by Congress includes \$900 billion for additional coronavirus relief and is full of wasteful spending of taxpayer money on programs that have nothing to do with the coronavirus, numerous critics argue.

CATO Institute's Chris Edwards points out that the bill "is an astounding 5,585 pages in length, including 544 pages for coronavirus relief, 1,915 pages for appropriations, and 3,126 pages for extensions and corrections.

"If it were printed at 11 inches per page, that's 61,435 inches or 5,120 feet," Edwards said. "Since there are 5,280 feet in a mile, the bill is almost a mile of paper end to end."

The nonprofit government watchdog [OpenTheBooks.com](https://www.openthebooks.com) said, "Christmas came early for Washington," and listed "just a few examples of taxpayer abuse" in the bill, including:

- \$10 million for "gender programs" in Pakistan
- \$40 million for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
- \$10 billion to loan forgiveness to the United States Post Office
- \$14 billion for mass transit programs, \$10 billion for state highways, and \$1 billion for Amtrak
- \$15 billion for live entertainment venues, cultural institutions, and independent movie theaters
- \$82 billion to K-12 schools and \$23 billion to colleges and universities.

Open the Books CEO Adam Andrzejewski asks Americans, "Are you OK with your hard-earned tax dollars being spent like this? We are not."

Americans for Prosperity's Brent Gardner says the bill is "packed with wasteful and unrelated spending provisions," adding, "It may be the season of giving, but that does not mean lawmakers should be giving taxpayer money away recklessly. Americans deserve better."

One addition tucked in the bill is the Protecting Lawful Streaming Act introduced by Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., which targets "large-scale, criminal, for-profit streaming services, not good faith

business disputes or noncommercial activities. Nor does it target individuals who access the pirated streams, knowingly or unknowingly, **TV Technology** reports.

Spike Cohen, retired Libertarian Party candidate for Vice President, **tweeted** that by voting for the bill, Congress “just robbed you of about \$2,750 each and gave you \$600 of it back, but if you watch a pirated copy of Mandalorian you could end up in prison, unable to ever get a business license, buried in fines for the rest of your life.

“If you stream copyrighted content without permission, you're now a federal felon, punishable by jail time, fines, losing your right to vote or own a firearm, etc. But they gave you \$600 of your own money though.”

The National Association of Broadcasters, which supports the bill, says it was "tailored to deter large-scale copyright piracy while ensuring that legitimate licenses are not subject to potential prosecution."

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, voted against the bill, arguing there were “countless pet projects that will escape close scrutiny” because of the bill's size.

“Had this bill been solely focused on re-opening the economy, getting Americans back to work, and jump starting a recovery, it would have had my enthusiastic support," he said.

The “5,600-page spending package fails to make any meaningful spending cuts and instead advances the interests of the radical Left, special interests, and swamp lobbyists” and paves the way for implementing a radical environmental program.