

Feb. 15, 2008  
Progressive Ponderings  
Voter "Stimulus Package"

"Recession" is a term that those despoiling our democracy and our economy are reluctant to acknowledge. "Depression" is even worse. One gets rejected from the market "myth" community for even suggesting the possibility.

Yet, our economic system's dogmatic elitists assign a "recession" and "depression" lifestyle to millions of fellow humans with policies that widen the gap between the man-in-charge and the base players he needs to function. Now that more of the middle class are being propelled into the recession/ depression lifestyle, our politicians, in this election year and with noble bi-partisan benevolence, have offered a short-term solution to festering long-term problems.

The "stimulus," a one-time tax rebate is trumpeted as the solution to the expanding mortgage/foreclosure crisis, the rising rent problems, a recession-to-depression economy, and personal and social long-term debt problems. This action continues the federal government's refusal to accept responsibility for the fragmenting economic situation and its flimsy answer in the form of a rebate, for staggering wars costs, and for denying domestic human and infrastructure needs; to add insult, it chooses a long-term credit card to be paid by the next generation. It also is designed to camouflage the snowballing inequality produced by our reliance on a market-system that exists only to make money for those in the corporate office.

It is stated by "stimulus" proponents that this one-time solution will increase consumer spending and thus boost the whole economy. What if--

- It is used to pay off accumulated debt for winter heating/transport costs?
- It's spent on China/ Asia imports and thus adds to our surging trade imbalance?
- It's used to catch up on just one overdue mortgage payment?
- It's used to pay for the surge in local taxes as states and the feds "trickle-down" the costs of government?
- It's used to catch up with "inflation" partially brought about by our declining dollar?
- It's used to pay off medical expenses by the surging number of uninsured and underinsured?
- It's saved by those who are semi-well-off out of fear of a continued unstable economic future?
- Name your own!

None of these really "prime the pump." A one-time "stimulus," like "surges," never solves underlying problems. In fact, they often amplify the problem by shifting it into the future when "real" solutions will have to be more drastic. This "stimulus" rebate is irrelevant, ineffective, and inefficient to the underlying U.S social and economic crises.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson was interviewed by MSNBC on Wednesday after the president's signing of the "stimulus" package. The interview questions and his responses were all about banks, credits markets, market forces and economic growth. I'd guess he used the word "market" in some manner every second sentence. The "stimulus" signing scene and the Treasury Secretary's interview were void of any mention of the victims of our economic policies. The perennially and perpetually oppressed – the aged, minorities, the working poor, the disadvantaged – are blamed for lack of personal responsibility although democratic capitalism is producing exactly what the elite designed – vast and growing inequality. Whole segments of society become "collateral damage" with the status of "unmentionables."

We have been double-crossed by the illusion of a romantic and meritorious economic system. The unjustifiable lack of sharing the world's resources, wealth and power cannot be sustained. Our debt is rarely spoken of in presidential debates. We've sacrificed our once world-leading manufacturing base to short-term corporate profit. We approved obscene portions of our budget to a military beast always looking for more – more money, more enemies, more vengeful "macho" patriots, more imperialists. We've allowed our infrastructure to crumble under an ideology that decrees that anything of common benefit, other than security, is socialistic. We've then blessed our institutions of inequality sustained by violence as the will of God.

Is this the government and policies we wish to bequeath?

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