

SENATE STIMULUS: STEAL FROM THE POOR TO GIVE TO THE AFFLUENT

ProPublica has done a comparison of the House and Senate stimulus packages. It shows, in striking fashion, how much the Grassley-Isakson-Coburn-Collins-Bad Nelson bill skews spending away from the poor—the most stimulative kind of spending, since these people need this money badly and would spend it right away—to the upper middle class:

Aid to Low-Income Families Total	\$124,186,000,000	\$97,230,900,000	▼\$26,955,100,000
Health insurance aid		\$2,272,000,000	▲\$2,272,000,000
Unemployment benefits	\$36,000,000,000	\$39,490,000,000	▲\$3,490,000,000
COBRA healthcare for unemployed	\$30,300,000,000	\$20,000,000,000	▼\$10,300,000,000
Hunger programs	\$21,176,000,000	\$17,100,000,000	▼\$4,076,000,000
Housing	\$13,510,000,000	\$8,600,000,000	▼\$4,910,000,000
Medicaid for unemployed	\$8,600,000,000		▼\$8,600,000,000
Job training and placement	\$5,120,000,000	\$4,300,000,000	▼\$820,000,000
Disabled and elderly programs	\$4,200,000,000		▼\$4,200,000,000
Other	\$5,280,000,000	\$5,468,900,000	▲\$188,900,000

The Senate bill took out \$27 billion in spending for the poor, ending with a total of \$97 billion.

Tax Cuts Total	\$282,284,000,000	\$358,162,000,000	▲\$75,878,000,000
Manufacturing		\$1,603,000,000	▲\$1,603,000,000
Individuals	\$184,637,000,000	\$302,198,000,000	▲\$117,561,000,000
State and local governments	\$42,957,000,000	\$14,272,000,000	▼\$28,685,000,000
Businesses	\$29,483,000,000	\$17,546,000,000	▼\$11,937,000,000

Energy projects	\$19,961,000,000	\$17,682,000,000	▼\$2,279,000,000
Other	\$5,246,000,000	\$4,861,000,000	▼\$385,000,000

The Senate bill put in \$117 billion in new tax cuts for individuals—more money than the entire \$97 billion they give for those items ProPublica classifies as "Aid to Low-Income Families."

Those tax cuts consist primarily of two things: the AMT patch (\$64 billion), which affects primarily upper middle class people in areas with high home prices, and the house flipping subsidy (up to \$48 billion), the full credit of which is only available if individuals pay at least \$7,.500 in taxes a year (there's also \$10-11 billion for auto sales incentives).

There are other reasons to oppose including these two tax cuts in the stimulus. The AMT patch, which isn't really stimulative in the first place, would get passed and properly offset in the budget appropriations process anyway. And the house flipping subsidy does little else than put money in realtor's pockets.

But the biggest reason is this: we're taking food, housing, and medical care away from those who desperately need it, to put more money in the pockets of the upper middle class.

The Senate "Moderates'" reverse Robin Hood: Steal from the poor and give to the affluent!