

Statement of Hon. Lee Terry (NE-02) on the House Floor on

□ H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

To view a cost estimate of the bill go to: □ www.cbo.gov

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

I come to the floor to oppose this bill reluctantly. When I am home in my District I talk to my neighbors, old school friends, and folks in the coffee shop, they share with me the economic problems they are facing - fellow workers being laid off, difficulty in meeting the house payment because there is now only one wage earner.

Small business owners are laying off people due to slow sales especially at car dealerships, retail stores, and restaurants.

The slow down of the U.S. economy has not missed my community - folks are hurting and Congress needs to act in ways that will jump start the housing markets, get credit and lending flowing, increase U.S. exports and provide tax relief so families have more money in their pocket to pay for daily household expenses.

But Madam Speaker, I have many worries about the massive bill that we have before us today.

I worry there is too much spending in this so-called "Stimulus" package. The cost of this bill today is \$791 billion.

Over time the bill will cost \$1.138 trillion.

There is too much spending on government programs that should be funded through the normal appropriations process, not in this bill.

Under the guise of stimulus, the huge increase in these government programs significantly

raises the baseline on which future spending cannot be sustained without large tax increases.
This policy could be devastating to our economy and prolong the current economic recession.

I worry that too little of the package goes toward the most effective tools for creating jobs for small business owners, like lower taxes and tax credits. In fact, the only help directed to small business, net operating loss, carry-back was reduced by this bill from \$35 billion to \$2 billion. The home buyer tax credit was reduced from \$11 billion to \$2 billion; the car tax credit to purchase a new car was reduced from \$11.5 billion to \$2 billion.

Infrastructure money for roads and bridges was \$67 billion, which I appreciate, although my request to add combined sewer operations funds for Omaha in the infrastructure section fell on deaf ears. Compare this to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's \$8 billion for a high speed train from Las Vegas to Disneyland . The priorities in this bill are wrong.

The small business tax breaks and infrastructure spending make up \$100 billion of the total \$791 billion in the bill, but accounts for 2.5 million jobs of the 3.5 million jobs the White House has estimated will be retained or created by H.R. 1.

Madam Speaker, to state it another way, \$691 billion of the spending may retain or create just one million jobs, most of which will be government bureaucrats that populate the big gray buildings in Washington, DC. That does little or nothing for job creation in my District.

I worry that printing nearly a trillion dollars of new money will result in inflation that will create economic problems over the next several years that will negate any short term gains that might be achieved by this package.

I worry that this additional trillion dollars of new money will create new economic problems by "crowding out" private investment dollars that otherwise might be available to stimulate our private sector economy, create new jobs, and grow the economy. Instead, the government will be sucking up those dollars to pay off its debt.

Not to mention the burden this places on our children and grandchildren who will be saddled with the responsibility of paying off that debt.

I am also very frustrated with the non-stimulus liberal policies that found their way into this bill. Two of these policies have earned a lot of attention. First, there is more than \$1 billion for "comparative medical treatment research" that will be spent by a new panel of non-physicians that reviews the medical treatment decisions of physicians and healthcare professionals. Many feel that this treatment review committee could result in the rationing of treatments of drugs for patients, or even deny medical care to some people, especially seniors.

Some have labeled this a form of "euthanasia."

While I don't foresee that any time soon, it is very scary.

Another liberal policy that was put in this bill is the reversing of welfare reform, which was the "Welfare to Work" program that was enacted on a bipartisan basis in 1996. This legislation will encourage individuals to remain on welfare who would otherwise be given two years to develop skills and training to get a job and move off of the welfare rolls.

The roll-back of this program will end up costing the taxpayers more money and reduce a job pool that many employers looked to for entry level hires.

Madam Speaker, this bill was made available to Members at 10:30 PM last night. I suspect the majority of my colleagues, like me, have not had time to read through this bill line for line.

We do not know what other policy shenanigans have been tucked into this massive bill.

I am also frustrated that a viable alternative, at least half the cost, was not even considered. The Republican alternative focused on small business owners and manufacturers, tax relief, consumer incentives to purchase new homes and cars and truck, along with infrastructure funding. Economists estimate this alternative would have created over 6 million jobs, twice the jobs at half the cost of the measure before us.

But this alternative bill was stiff-armed by the Majority.

Madam Speaker, it is because of all these worries and frustrations that I am not able to support this package. We could have worked on a bipartisan basis to craft a bill that we could all support. But we were not given a chance to do that.

This bill was written behind closed doors by a small group of House Democrats.

The American people deserve better from us.

I will be voting against this bill.

