



Republicans Mount Mini-Criticisms of Stimulus in the Media

BY MATTHEW SHERMAN*

Economists and political leaders, from the Federal Reserve to the White House, have reiterated the need for concerted fiscal measures to stave off a severe recession. President Barack Obama has set a goal of saving or creating 3 to 4 million jobs with an economic recovery package that in its current form includes some \$900 billion of increased spending and tax cuts.¹

The stimulus bill passed the House of Representatives without a single Republican vote. Congressional Republicans argued that the bill included large sums of wasteful spending that would not be effective in stimulating the economy. They offered several specific examples in recent television appearances.

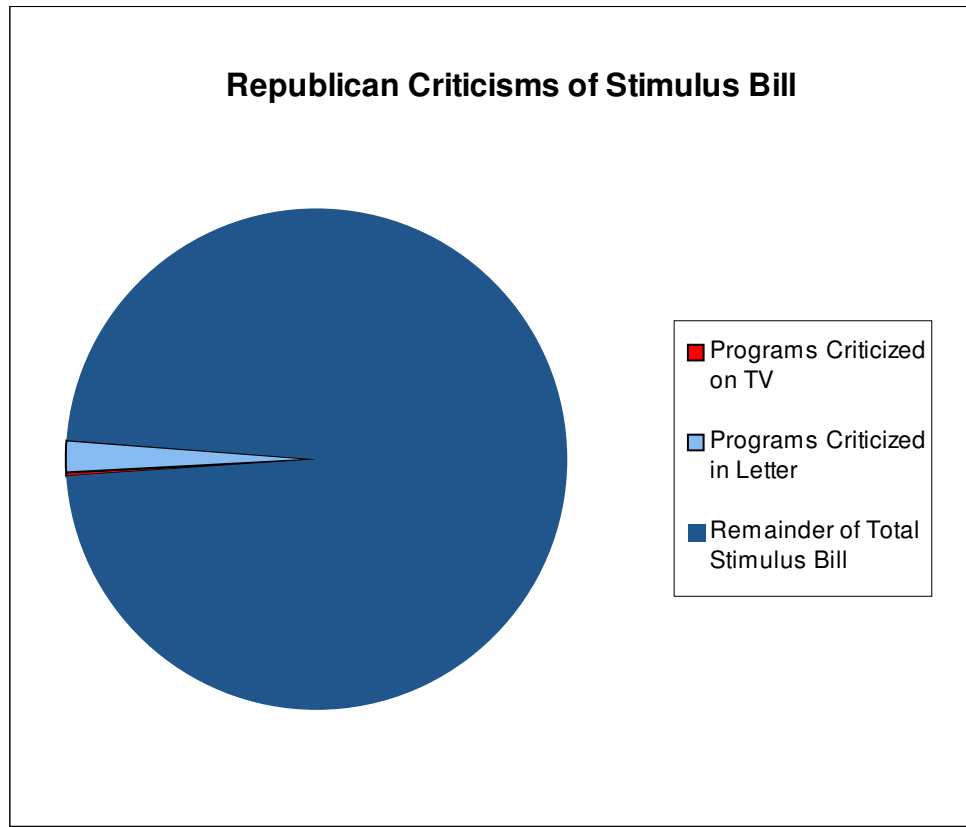
Appearing on *Meet the Press*, House Minority Leader John Boehner criticized the recovery package for including \$21 million to re-sod the National Mall as well as \$200 million for contraceptives.² On *Face the Nation*, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell mentioned \$600 million going to buy hybrid vehicles for federal employees and \$150 million for honeybee insurance.³ Senator John McCain questioned a \$50 million provision for the National Endowment for the Arts on CNN's *American Morning*.⁴ And on *Fox News Sunday*, Senator Jon Kyl criticized a program that would provide benefits to World War II veterans in the Philippines.⁵

Republican leaders also released a longer list of provisions they viewed as 'wasteful' to the media, including \$6 billion to make federal buildings more energy-efficient and \$1.2 billion for "youth activities," including summer jobs programs.⁶

Combined together, all of the provisions in question amount to roughly \$19.5 billion, which is little more than 2 percent of the total economic recovery package. This indicates that, despite their outspoken pessimism, Congressional Republicans object to only a modest fraction of the stimulus package.

Center for Economic and
Policy Research
1611 Connecticut Ave, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20009
tel: 202-293-5380
fax: 202-588-1356
www.cepr.net

*Matthew Sherman is a Research Assistant at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C.



¹ Taylor, Andrew. "Obama: Catastrophe Coming if Rescue Isn't Passed." *Associated Press*, February 4, 2009. Retrieved February 4, 2009 from http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090204/ap_on_go_pr_wh/congress_stimulus.

² *Meet the Press*, NBC. January 25, 2009. Transcript. See <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/28841300/page/3/>.

³ "McConnell: 'Wait-and-See' on Daschle." *Face the Nation*, CBS. February 1, 2009. Transcript. See: <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/02/01/ftn/main4767158.shtml>.

⁴ *American Morning*. CNN. February 2, 2009. Transcript. See <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0902/02/ltm.02.html>.

⁵ *Fox News Sunday*. FOX News. February 1, 2009. Transcript. See <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,486394,00.html>.

⁶ "What GOP Leaders Deem Wasteful in Senate Stimulus Bill." CNN. February 3, 2009. Retrieved February 4, 2009 from <http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/02/gop.stimulus.worries/index.html>.