



Covid-19 Legislation

If the Covid-19 Pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we know humanity is in real trouble when all the humans in the world are working together. In the past, the greatest threats resulted from humanity's inability to come together and when nations were at each other's throats. We live in a new world order where American strength allows us to play offense exclusively when faced with existential problems. This is different from wars, when energy and resources are dedicated to protecting society from the destructive impulses of other humans, leaving less to deal with real problems. The Spanish Flu of 1918 is an example of a world investing energy and resources into a world war rather than protecting people from a pandemic exacerbated by war. The way in which we are able to dedicate so much to fighting a pandemic without having to waste resources fighting each other should inform preparedness going forward and how Congress legislates.

When spending trillions of dollars, it is critical that such an expenditure leave a legacy as great as the New Deal, which cost less. This level of spending should result in a country infrastructurally rejuvenated in the spirit of Robert Moses on steroids. This should be done in addition to tactical adjustments such as paid sick time, reforms to unemployment insurance, ramped up production to fight the pandemic, financial assistance to workers and stimulus for businesses.

A macro goal of visionary legislation is to create a path to fight pandemics while maintaining regular economic activity as much as possible. When shutting down the country, it is easy for our leaders to pull the different levers of transportation without the normal stress of a functioning economy. However, transporting personnel and product with the normal economy humming requires parallel infrastructures such as exist for the military during wars. Military transports barely register as a disruption, whether they are domestic or international, and regardless of the cargo. We must possess the same ability to fight pandemics and other known unknowns as well as the unknown unknowns. The national attitude toward national service and infrastructure requires an adjustment for us to realize that we are planning the next 100 years, just as the New Dealers realized almost a century ago. When spending and borrowing trillions, one must consider the possibility that this our generation's one shot at the proverbial apple to define the future. Roosevelt and his generation gave us the New Deal, worker's rights and an infrastructure that still serves. LBJ and his generation left us the Great Society, civil rights and a freshly unrestrained free press. Reagan, Tip O'Neil and their governments brought military and financial hegemony and an end to many repressive radical regimes.

Here is how Congress should legislate on a visionary level:

1. System scaled for mass testing, screening and treatment
 - a. Viral and antibody testing
 - b. Expedited FDA procedures for emergencies
2. Enhanced Transportation Grids

- a. High-Speed Rail system connecting cities that can support personnel movement during a pandemic
- b. Enhanced highway system, part of which is reserved for national emergencies (possibly for holidays)
- c. Drone delivery systems to move necessary supplies and – down the road – personnel
3. Mandatory National Service after High School including a significant civilian component
 - a. During times of crisis, rather than calling upon the military to deal with non-military emergencies, the government can call upon reserves and standing service members with relevant training, such as healthcare service members during a health crisis in ways the USPHSCC and FEMA were unable during the Covid-19 and other recent emergencies, such as Sandy and Katrina
 - b. Levels the playing field, allowing Americans of all backgrounds to learn and experience the best practices in hygiene, nutrition, exercise and overall health
 - c. Creates a labor reserve of healthcare workers, educators, drivers, pilots and other necessary personnel to deal with known and unknown crises
 - d. See essay for non Covid-19 elements and benefits
4. Annual drills for the known and unknown
5. Annual week of quarantine, family and national focus
 - a. See essay for elaboration
6. Reconceptualize criminal justice system, and specifically the role of prosecutors, following an analysis of recidivism, incarceration, and crime rates in the aftermath of the Covid-19 epidemic
 - a. Legislate funds to study the results of the early release of prisoners as a result of Covid-19
 - b. Considering that infectious diseases exist outside of pandemics, Congress must study and determine which types of exposure to infectious diseases are deemed cruel and unusual punishment
7. Full study of Covid-19 and the response
 - a. The forward-looking goal is to inform future responses
 - b. How were treatments and vaccines expedited in response to Covid-19
 - c. Socioeconomic impact of testing for the virus and antibodies
 - d. Determine the role of race in treatment and mortality
 - e. Determine if genetic predisposition plays a role
 - f. Determine if religious/cultural affiliation/practice plays a role, specifically involving routine meetings and close community ties
8. Demand of reparations from China
 - a. In the form of a transfer of US debt from China to individual American citizens
 - b. Transfers skewed toward those who suffered from Covid-19 and members of marginalized communities hardest hit
 - c. Transfers skewed toward communities traditionally underserved by the American healthcare system, with dividends specifically covering healthcare expenses

Tactically, Congress should consider many of the ideas already out there. They should also consider the following:

1. Reverting from daylight to standard time and consider moving to a single national time zone for the duration of the pandemic
 - a. This allows for messaging and actions to be accomplished on a national level, as the Covid-19 pandemic demands
2. Release from prisons and jails anyone where it is reasonable
 - a. A definition of 'reasonable' should include a community-based non-for-profit, tax exempt organization taking responsibility with incentive and limited liability