

# Spreading Your Wealth Around

## How Democrats Want to Redistribute Americans' Hard-Earned Money



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*The following are real bills or initiatives proposed during the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress by Congressional Democrats, who would take wealth from middle-class working Americans and redistribute it for a myriad of big government purposes.*

**The Department of Peace and Nonviolence Act (H.R. 808 / Kucinich).** This legislation would establish a new multi-billion dollar federal department, the Department of Peace, as a Cabinet level department and focus on peace education and training. The legislation has 70 cosponsors.

**Voting Rights for Ex-Felons (H.R. 6778 / Jackson-Lee).** This legislation seeks to ensure voting rights for ex-felons.

**Regulating Restaurant Menus (H.R. 3895 / DeLauro).** This legislation, co-sponsored by House Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) and Oversight & Government Reform Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA), among other Democrats, proposes federal regulation of restaurant menus. The legislation would mandate that federal food labeling requirements be extended to food menus in chain restaurants.

**Shipping Our Wealth Overseas.** Democrats want to raise taxes to spread Americans' wealth overseas and give Americans' hard-earned money to foreign citizens and governments, and they've introduced legislation to do it. As Frank Gaffney, Jr. of the Center for Security Policy notes: "Sen. Obama has exhibited a commitment to 'spreading the wealth around' that extends far beyond his ominously socialistic Robin Hood agenda for this country. Late last year, he introduced the Global Poverty Act (S.2433). . .[A] leading sponsor is the Democratic vice presidential candidate, Sen. Joe Biden, who moved S.2433 to the Senate floor without a single hearing in his Foreign Relations Committee." The bill would require the United States to coordinate "the goal of poverty reduction with the other internationally recognized Millennium Development Goals." Those goals "include (but are not limited to): 'eradicating extreme hunger, promoting gender equality, empowering women,' combating communicable diseases, 'ensuring environmental sustainability,' affording access to clean water and sanitation and 'achieving significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.'" What this means, Gaffney notes, is that "for each year between 2002 and 2015, the United States would have to cough up roughly \$65 billion over-and-above its current foreign aid distributions. This amounts to a staggering commitment of at least \$845 billion – all of which is to be given to the notoriously incompetent and corrupt United Nations to manage."

**Blocking U.N. Reform.** Congressional Democrats have blocked Republican proposals to reform the United Nations while appropriating billions of taxpayer dollars (more than \$5.3 billion in FY 2005, according to the Office of Management & Budget) for a broken, unaccountable, anti-American UN system. More than one-third of the top officials at the UN refuse to make public financial disclosures.

**Federal Gas Stamps (H.R. 6561 / McDermott).** Instead of increasing domestic energy production and using a share of the revenues to develop alternative and renewable energy, this bill increases taxpayer funding for the social services block grant and requires states to use the funding to provide a gasoline subsidy for families with incomes below 300 percent of the federal poverty line.

**Climate Change Subsidies (H.R. 6316 / Doggett).** This legislation would force American companies to buy, at auction, allowances to emit carbon dioxide, similar to the old Church practice of buying and selling indulgences. The government would “spread the wealth around” from the auction to a variety of big government enterprises, including climate change rebates for certain families; a health care trust fund; funding for non-governmental organizations to work on international forestry; and other purposes. The bill is co-sponsored by Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), Democratic Caucus Vice Chairman John Larson (D-CT), Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and many other high-ranking House Democrats.

**Tax Relief for Trial Lawyers (Section 311 of House-passed version of H.R. 6049).** This legislation would give more favorable tax treatment to expenses of trial attorneys while costing taxpayers \$1.5 billion over the next decade. The \$1.5 billion figure does not reflect the economic cost of the additional lawsuits taxpayers and job creators would be forced to endure. The bill is co-sponsored by Democratic Caucus Vice Chairman John Larson (D-CT) and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), among other House Democrats.

**Subsidize Doctors (H.R. 6898 / Stark).** While promoting the spread of Health Information Technology is a bipartisan goal, this legislation includes a provision giving each physician \$41,000 to purchase a health IT system. There is no requirement that the physician spend it all on Health IT; as long as the physician buys a qualifying system – or even already bought one – he or she gets the whole \$41,000. Total cost to the taxpayers: roughly \$24 billion. The bill is co-sponsored by Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) and eight other House Democrats.

**The 21st Century Green High-Performing Public School Facilities Act (H.R. 3021 / Chandler).** This legislation, with a price tag of \$20 billion, would dramatically increase the costs of building schools and significantly expand the size and scope of the federal government. It includes flawed “prevailing wage” mandates that deny jobs to non-union businesses and workers while driving up construction costs for schools. It includes so-called Davis-Bacon requirements that will raise the cost of school construction by more than 25 percent when compared to similar projects completed under market conditions – money that could instead go to putting additional teachers in the classroom – as well as “green mandates” that make construction more costly and could actually reduce efficiency and conservation. The bill is co-sponsored by 142 House Democrats, including Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), Democratic Caucus Vice Chairman John Larson (D-CT), Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Education & Labor Committee Chairman George

Miller (D-CA), and Chief Deputy Democratic Whips Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Janice Schakowsky (D-IL), and John Tanner (D-TN).

**Backup Ballot Legislation (H.R. 5803 / Lofgren).** House Administration Committee Democrats during the current Congress opted to ignore the severe voting impediments that disenfranchise thousands of military personnel overseas, and instead passed this \$75 million legislation, which would give grants to states for providing backup paper ballots in emergency situations – something states are already doing. According to a recent [survey conducted by the Election Center](#), the vast majority of states already provide such ballots to voters. Of the 42 states that responded, 39 currently provide paper or backup paper ballots in the event of machine failures.

**Wasteful Carbon Offsets.** “In November, the Democratic-led House spent about \$89,000 on so-called carbon offsets. This purchase was supposed to cancel out greenhouse-gas emissions from House buildings – including half of the U.S. Capitol – by triggering an equal reduction in emissions elsewhere. Some of the money went to farmers in [North Dakota](#), for tilling practices that keep carbon buried in the soil. But some farmers were already doing this, for other reasons, before the House paid a cent. Other funds went to [Iowa](#), where a power plant had been temporarily rejiggered to burn more cleanly. But that test project had ended more than a year before the money arrived.” (“Value of U.S. House’s Carbon Offsets Is Murky,” Farenthold, David; Washington Post, January 28, 2008)

**Lighting the Capitol by Burning Taxpayer Dollars.** “The warm white glow of the Capitol dome may soon go green, part of an effort by Democratic congressional leaders to save energy and modernize the District's nocturnal landscape. But like so many issues on [Capitol Hill](#), the plan to update the building's 18-year-old exterior lighting has ignited partisan bickering. Republicans and other critics consider the project's early phase wasteful, and they question whether a \$671,900 contract to design the lighting system was steered by Rep. [Robert A. Brady](#) (D-Pa.), chairman of the House Administration Committee, to a company in his home district. . . Even if a new configuration were to miraculously reduce electricity consumption to zero, at current electricity rates it would take more than 45 years to recoup money spent on the system's design, critics note.” (“Beacon or Boondoggle? New Lights for the Capitol,” Lee, Christopher; Washington Post, April 1, 2008)

**Wage Insurance (H.R. 2202 / McDermott).** This bill requires states to implement a reemployment adjustment assistance (i.e. “wage insurance”) program. States would be required to pay eligible reemployed individuals (i.e. those who separate from their employer after January 1, 2009 and accept a lower-paying job) an amount equal to 50 percent or more of the difference in wages between the old and new job (up to \$10,000 per year, for each of up to two years following the date of separation from their old job), even if the job change was completely voluntary. Benefits would be supported by a new Federal payroll tax on wages up to about \$100,000.

**Paving the Way for the Second “New Deal” (H. Con. Res. 420 / McDermott).** This resolution, a road map for the Democrats’ redistributionist agenda, “expresses the sense of Congress regarding the need to re-weave America's social safety net to respond to the needs of the 21st

century economy and labor market” and calls for a massive expansion in the Social Security Act, including mandating increasing eligibility for and the amount of unemployment benefits, a new national wage insurance program, supported by the first new Federal payroll tax since the 1960s, national health insurance, mandated employer-provided pensions, a massive expansion of federal child care assistance including coverage for elder care, mandated employer-provided family and medical leave, and further progressive redistribution of income involving Social Security benefits.

**Promoting Internet Gambling (H.R. 6501 / McDermott).** This legislation would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a taxpayer-funded Safe Internet Gambling Practices Program to promote responsible Internet gambling behavior. The bill is co-sponsored by Democratic Caucus Vice Chairman John Larson (D-CT) and Education & Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA).

**Non-Stimulating “Stimulus” (H.R. 7110 / Obey).** This legislation would spend \$39.9 billion taxpayer dollars on infrastructure under the guise of “economic stimulus” – but economists believe infrastructure spending will do little, if anything to stimulate the economy. Infrastructure projects require many years to initiate and more to complete, thus having no immediate effect. Independent analyses by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) have all concluded that any jobs that are created as a result of infrastructure spending are created at the expense of jobs in the same or other sectors of the economy, effectively creating no additional jobs to the economy at large.

**The “Don’t Let the Bed Bugs Bite” Act of 2008 (H.R. 6068 / Butterfield).** This legislation would authorize the Secretary of Commerce to provide grants to states that establish a program to inspect at least 20 percent of rooms in lodging facilities in the state for bed bugs.