

Here's a stimulus spending solution

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It all sounded so direct and simple when we first heard last year of the government's ideas to stimulate the U.S. economy and help fight our way out of the Great Recession. We had read the comments by economists and historians who agreed that an infusion of capital was the only way we could reverse the speeding downward spiral, even if it meant adding a huge amount to our federal deficit.

And it made sense, because at that time government leaders were talking about putting Americans back to work by rebuilding a crumbling national infrastructure. Our sewers, bridges and roads are falling apart, and a stimulus boost of federal spending would kill two birds with one stone.

Not so fast. Of course, we all know by now of the many different forms the stimulus package has taken, from bailing out banks to taking ownership in car manufacturers. We're offering tax credits for new home buyers and people who trade in gas-guzzling cars for vehicles that are more fuel-efficient.

And of course, there is a whole lot more to what some estimate to be a \$787 billion spending package. Ohio and other states are using big chunks of the money to plug the holes in their budget sieves. Some 50 million veterans and retirees got a \$250 check. Teachers got rehired. A total of \$19 billion was pledged to update health care IT.

And on the story goes. The trouble is that many of these investments, while perhaps needed and promising to the long-term future of the country, don't produce much quick relief.

So along comes business owner and entrepreneur Jack Scott with a web-based petition effort to prod our political leaders to change course in a way that would produce far quicker results. And it's a plan that is so simple, it defies explanation why it wasn't considered before.

At his web site, Stimulate-US-Now.org, Mr. Scott delivers a summary of his plan in a cogent video that's about six to seven minutes long. Stick with it, because his plan is worth considering.

Basically, his plan would put \$3,000 pre-paid, government-issued debit cards in the hands of every American resident over the age of 18. And the cards would have to be used within six months of issuance.

As Mr. Scott notes in his video, the government's first attempt at putting money in people's hands with a tax rebate had little effect because it was cash and often people simply put it away or used it to pay down debt. Not that there is much wrong with either thing because debt and lack of savings helped fuel our problem in the first place. But putting debit cards that must be used into the hands of Americans would generate an enormous amount of economic activity.

I'm no economist, but I think Mr. Scott's proposal is worth considering. Check it out at his web site, and let me know what you think.



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