

Cato Policy Report

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BIG MONEY MEANS BIG LOBBYING

Even as President Biden and congressional Democrats work to pass their \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill, they're bracing for the next big legislative scramble, over another massive spending bill that's already drawing intense lobbying and threatening Democratic unity.

Biden's next package could be far pricier than the coronavirus bill. Although plans remain fluid, it's expected to center on a major infrastructure investment, while also tackling other priorities such as clean energy, domestic manufacturing, and child and elder care. However, as the next must-pass bill in a divided Congress, where legislative opportunities will be scarce, it has unleashed a torrent of other demands, as advocates for issues from climate change to immigration push to get included.

— *Washington Post*, February 17, 2021

A REASONABLE RESPONSE

“For a very long time in Kenya, police have been thought of as killers. See a policeman? You run. Nothing good could come of it,” [police director George Kinoti] said. “If we want the public's confidence, we have to show them we are not all like that—we do work for them.”

— *Washington Post*, March 1, 2021

WE LOVE HIGH-SPEED RAIL, BUT NOT IF IT COSTS US REVENUE

Florida transportation authorities on Monday gave Brightline what appears to be a final deadline of mid-summer to iron out agreements with local and state governments for the extension of passenger rail service from Orlando's airport to Tampa. . . .

The Department of Transportation added a long list of terms that must be fulfilled before a lease for access to state highway space can be finalized.

Topping the list is a requirement that

Brightline conduct a study on train ridership and the amount of toll revenue expected to be lost by the state and Central Florida Expressway Authority when passenger rail becomes operational.

A privately owned and funded company, Brightline must also agree to a method for compensating the state and the authority for lost toll revenues.

— *Orlando Sentinel*, March 2, 2021

NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT

In the Caribbean nation of Sint Maarten . . . with a population of about 40,000, members of parliament earn upwards of \$10,000 a month.

— *Washington Post*, March 10, 2021

INEQUALITY REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

A small minority of frequent flyers dominate air travel in almost all countries with high aviation emissions, analysis suggests.

In the UK, 70% of flights are made by a wealthy 15% of the population, with 57% not flying abroad at all. . . . in the US, just 12% of people take two-thirds of flights. . . .

Alethea Warrington, from Possible, said: “This report shows the same pattern of inequality around the world—a small minority of frequent flyers take an unfair share of the flights.”

— *BBC*, March 31, 2021

JUST A LITTLE MORE TOTALITARIANISM, AND FINALLY SOCIALISM WILL WORK

North Korea is suffering its worst slump in more than two decades, experts say. . . .

Kim [Jong Un] has turned his back on even modest economic and market reforms and reverted back to de facto Leninism, emphasizing central planning while trying to clamp down on the private

entrepreneurial activity that has become a mainstay of the country's mixed economy, he said. In speeches to the ruling party, Kim demanded the restoration and strengthening of the system under which the economy runs “under the unified guidance and management of the state.” . . .

Kim also announced plans to expand state control of society, clamp down on foreign culture and media, and launch a “powerful mass campaign against practices running counter to the socialist lifestyle.”

— *Washington Post*, February 21, 2021

WE SHOULD ALL BE ABLE TO HECKLE SENATORS

I didn't write the loopholes you exploit, @amazon—your armies of lawyers and lobbyists did. But you bet I'll fight to make you pay your fair share. And fight your union-busting. And fight to break up Big Tech so you're not powerful enough to heckle senators with snotty tweets.

— *Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) on Twitter*, March 25, 2021

GOOD THING CLINTON, BUSH, AND OBAMA HAVEN'T APPLIED TO WORK IN THE BIDEN WHITE HOUSE

Dozens of young White House staffers have been suspended, asked to resign, or placed in a remote work program due to past marijuana use, frustrating staffers who were pleased by initial indications from the Biden administration that recreational use of cannabis would not be immediately disqualifying for would-be personnel, according to three people familiar with the situation.

The policy has even affected staffers whose marijuana use was exclusive to one of the 14 states—and the District of Columbia—where cannabis is legal.

— *Daily Beast*, March 18, 2021