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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
HEALTH
ENERGY
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON RULES

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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October 7, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

I urge you to hold a hearing on the implementation of the American Rescue Plan, so that we may fulfil the oversight responsibilities of the Energy and Commerce Committee. Nearly seven months have passed since the enactment of the American Rescue Plan, but despite costing the American taxpayer \$1.9 trillion, many Americans have yet to feel or recognize its effects. As the House committee with jurisdiction over the Department of Health and Human Services, the agency responsible for allocating many of these funds, it is only reasonable that proper oversight is enforced to ensure Congressional intent is practiced and the taxpayer dollar used accordingly during implementation.

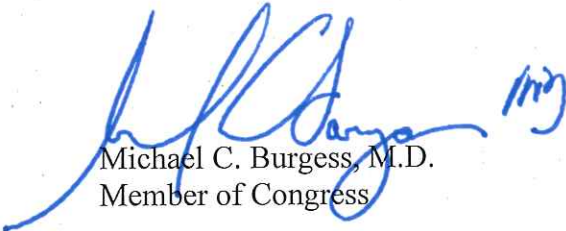
During consideration of the American Rescue Plan, many lawmakers heard from states and localities on the urgent need for emergency funding. While I do not doubt that many localities were in need of assistance, it was reported that as of this summer, most had spent only 2.5% of the \$350 billion that was appropriated to states and localities in the American Rescue Plan.

I understand this large sum of funds will take time to properly distribute, and states and localities must be prudent and spend allocations in ways which will prove to be an investment and grant long-term security, but it is imperative that these funds have adequate direction from Congress stipulating the appropriateness of their expenditure. States and localities need certainty that they are spending funds as directed and that these funds will not be at risk of being revoked for improper use. Fortunately, as directed by Section 602 of the American Rescue Plan, the Treasury Department is requiring expenditure reports with an interim report for all states and localities having been due on August 31, 2021, and quarterly reports starting October 31, 2021 for states and cities with populations of 250,000 residents or more.

I am afraid that Congress and the American people may lose sight of the significance that \$1.9 trillion in one single stimulus package may mean and the responsibility associated with appropriating such funds. While these funds were appropriated with the intention of helping communities recover from and respond to the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that the American people are aware of specific projects being funded by this package. I have read reports of the American Rescue Plan being used by cities to buy 78 electric vehicles, build technology labs at recreation centers, and fund long avoided infrastructure projects¹. Although these projects may have merit, are they really the intent of the American Rescue Plan?

It has been a tumultuous and difficult year for Americans across the country, with businesses, schools, and social endeavors operating different than the norm – Congress and the Energy and Commerce Committee have been no different. However, as we continue to consider historically large spending packages, we have an obligation to our Constituents to oversee the implementation and use of these funds.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-states-cities-spend-federal-pandemic-funds-191dce8c75b0f5159691f0606d910d74>