

***By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor***

Here we are, nearly five months since the touted federal stimulus bill was signed by our president.

While there may be some "stimulus" in pockets around the country, the national unemployment rate is now at 9.5%.

Senators and congressmen, as well as the administration, hurried the bill through the process because it was so important to get things moving "right now." They predicted the \$787 billion package would help keep unemployment under 8%.

It was so important to hurry it through, proponents said, so "shovel ready" projects could get going right away.

Yes, some of that has happened, but, guess what? Only 25% of the money in the package has been dispersed (not spent). Only a little over 10% of the stimulus money is out there "stimulating."

Could that be due to all the red tape attached? Just ask our fire department about the 45-page guidelines they had to follow in applying for stimulus funding for a proposed new fire hall.

Billions of the money from the stimulus package isn't even scheduled to be spent until 2011.

Now, pundits in Washington D.C. are even talking about a second stimulus package.

Are they kidding?

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office is estimating that there could be as much as \$50 billion wasted in the five-month old bill.

If you want to see what some of that waste is, check out U.S. Sen. Tom Coburn's website. In mid-June, he released a report titled, "100 Stimulus Projects: A Second Opinion."

Coburn makes note of the 100 worst examples of waste in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Action, or stimulus bill. Just the waste he identifies amounts to \$5.5 billion in funding.

Find Coburn's website at: [www.coburn.senate.gov](http://www.coburn.senate.gov)

Beyond whether the bill is doing much to help the economy is also the fact that our country is borrowing billions to support the spending.

I had maintained in an earlier editorial that so much more could have been done with this money, including cutting payroll taxes for employers and employees.

Yes, we all received \$13 per week (avg.) in our paychecks with a slight adjustment of those taxes. Some receiving social security or SSI payments also were to see some increases.

Has it made a difference to you yet?

Our newspaper has received multiple press releases since February from Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson's office, who voted for the package and cites how much of the stimulus money is coming to this state.

At the bottom of each release, it states, "Senator Nelson played a key role in the passage of the \$787 billion stimulus bill. He worked with a bipartisan group of nearly 20 senators to better focus The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on tax cuts for the middle class and job creation for millions of Americans."

